

# Cranford Parish Council

## Annual Report 2021



Chair Stephen Pickard

Current Councillors Mo Cerrone, Alison Gorton, Stuart Holford, Trudy Martin, Rex Moore, Jonathan West

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**Website** [www.cranfordparishcouncil.com](http://www.cranfordparishcouncil.com)

### 1 MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

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Dear Residents,

After an unprecedented 6 year term following its election in May 2015 (the normal 4 year term of office was extended initially in 2019 due to Northamptonshire County Reorganisation, and in 2020 due to The Covid 19 Pandemic), this is the final report of the current Cranford Parish Council.

### 2 CURRENT SITUATION ELECTIONS- AS OF 6<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021

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Unfortunately, and despite much effort to both encourage and persuade Residents to stand for election, Cranford has only 3 candidates who have completed nomination forms, for a Parish Council which requires 7 members. Three members is the minimum required for decisions to be made, and is an unsustainable situation at the start of a 4 year term. Parish Council work is unpaid and essential community work, and is the first tier of Government, and requires active participation by community members. We now have 35 working days to co-opt or recruit 4 other members, or face new elections being called at Parish Council expense. This I am afraid is a stark situation to be in, and Residents will need to understand that the amount of work that can be undertaken by an understrength Parish Council will be much reduced. This situation is compounded, as we search for new Parish Clerk, after the resignation of our current Clerk following 5.5 years of valuable service to the Community.

### 3 FUTURE

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Currently the Parish Council meets 12 times a year on Thursday evenings, for 2 hours between 7.00pm and 9.00pm. This work is both varied and challenging in equal measure. To assist Residents future participation in The Parish Council, meetings will be reduced to 6 per year, and be restricted to 90 minutes, with monthly planning applications dealt with by a sub group of members as applications arise. This we hope will cover the essential work of The Parish Council, and allow some new projects to be undertaken. We hope this may allow new candidates to come forward for co-option, without the need for candidates to undergo formal election procedure. Residents often feel that they might not have the necessary skills, nothing could be further from the truth, and with training, you can develop your skills and learn over time.

## 4 COVID 19 2020-2021

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At the outset of the year, The Covid 19 Pandemic dominated our work load to the exclusion of many other matters. Whilst quickly Cranford Village Hall and the newly formed Cranford Community News rose to the challenge of providing both support and news for residents, The Parish sought to act a 'critical friend' in asking questions, and seeking to act as a means of disseminating key official information to those groups, as well as trying to ensure that residents had access to the support they needed. The Red Lion Pub quickly shifted to providing essential food delivery services and so allowed residents choice as regards shopping and 'staying local'. The Parish Council used monies to support some of the transport costs of The Red Lion, at that difficult time for all concerned.

The Parish Council had to switch to virtual meetings and was still able to fulfil all its statutory planning duties, and has responded to residents enquiries with factual and clear answers.

## 5 HANWOOD PARK

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Hanwood Park and the sustainable urban extension has 'broken the skyline', and is now in full swing with earth moving and new house starts. Residential house building at scale is going to be a feature of the next 10 to 15 years, with its attendant earth and road works, a daunting prospect for residents both along Cranford Road and the Village itself. As part of this change, The Parish Boundary has been redrawn, and now sadly, excludes the residents of Cranford Road, who will be subsumed into the Hanwood Park Development. Cranford Parish Council is well respected at Kettering East Planning Meetings, and is known for the command of detail, and informed questioning, a role it will need to continue to perform over the coming years.

## 6 FOOTPATHS

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At a local level, we have extended the bridge that crosses a small water course in the copse on the path that leads from Duck End to Twywell Hills and Dales. Evidence from footfall has indicated that this path has seen increased use, with the extended bridge allowing access for pedestrians throughout the wet winter months of December 2020 and January 2021. In the last days of this Parish Council, Northamptonshire Highways, at the suggestion of the Parish Council, improved 25 metres of path at the junction of Thrapston Road and Duck End.

## 7 POORS LAND CHARITY

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Parish Council funds following the dissolution of The Cranford Poors Land Charity Fund, have been used to facilitate the provision of disabled access and a new entrance porch to The Village Hall, an investment in facilities we have been pleased to assist in.

## 8 RECOGNITION

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Finally, I would like to thank all the people who have served during the past 6 years, and I would like to thank the 6 other Parish Councillors who have allowed us to conclude the current Parish Council with a full complement. They offer a wide range of skills and knowledge, without which, much of the success of The Parish Council would not have been possible. I would also like to thank our Parish Clerk, for her support, both of myself as Chairman and the Parish Council in general. It is in no small part to Claire our Parish Clerk that we are held in good respect by Statutory Bodies and are able to represent Cranford in such a positive manner. As for myself I had hoped to 'retire' from the Parish Council, but hope now to support my 2 other colleagues, and look forward to welcoming new members, who will take the Parish Council in new and exciting directions.

# Cranford Parish Council

**HAVE YOU THOUGHT OF  
BECOMING  
A PARISH COUNCILLOR?**



- 🐿 Are you interested in your local community and preserving village life?
- 🐿 Do you have concerns about what happens in the village and surrounding area?
- 🐿 Are you interested in making sure that the best possible services are available for residents?

It is very important that the Parish Council is made from all branches of the community so that any decisions are made in a democratic way. For the last few years, we have had vacancies- and this will continue after the elections

**Act now! Become a Parish Councillor and have a say in where you live!**

Please speak to the Clerk or any Councillor for more information

07522 582251 or email [cranfordparish@gmail.com](mailto:cranfordparish@gmail.com)